

RON WYDEN
OREGON

RANKING MEMBER OF COMMITTEE ON
FINANCE

221 DIRKSEN SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510
(202) 224-5244

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3703

COMMITTEES:

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
COMMITTEE ON BUDGET
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & NATURAL RESOURCES
SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE
JOINT COMMITTEE ON TAXATION

August 5, 2019

The Honorable Alex M. Azar II
Secretary of Health and Human Services
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

The Honorable Kevin K. McAleenan
Acting Secretary of Homeland Security
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
245 Murray Lane, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20528

The Honorable Michael R. Pompeo
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretaries Azar, McAleenan, and Pompeo:

I write to express my strong concerns about reports that the Trump administration is considering setting the refugee cap for 2020 at zero—effectively shutting down refugee admissions for the year. I urge you in the strongest terms to reject this misguided idea and to set a refugee cap that appropriately reflects the growing international need.

The United States has welcomed more than three million refugees since 1975. These individuals did not simply decide that life would be more conformable in America and many, if not most, would have preferred to remain in their homes. No, these men, women and children were forced to flee—from persecution, from violence and from war. Indeed, the UN estimates that 25 people were forced from their homes every minute last year and more than 70 million people have now been forcibly displaced by conflict and persecution—the highest number the UN refugee agency has ever seen.

Refugees helped found and build this country and they continue to contribute in profoundly meaningful ways. It is simply wrong to assert that refugees are a burden on American communities; they serve as teachers, doctors, small business owners, and members of the military. It is similarly inaccurate to imply that refugees pose some existential risk to the country or to Americans. Refugees must complete a lengthy and thorough screening and vetting

911 NE 11TH AVENUE
SUITE 630
PORTLAND, OR 97232
(503) 326-7525

405 EAST 8TH AVE
SUITE 2020
EUGENE, OR 97401
(541) 431-0229

SAC ANNEX BUILDING
105 FIR ST
SUITE 201
LA GRANDE, OR 97850
(541) 962-7691

U.S. COURTHOUSE
310 WEST 6TH ST
ROOM 118
MEDFORD, OR 97501
(541) 858-5122

THE JAMISON BUILDING
131 NW HAWTHORNE AVE
SUITE 107
BEND, OR 97701
(541) 330-9142

707 13TH ST, SE
SUITE 285
SALEM, OR 97301
(503) 589-4555

[HTTP://WYDEN.SENATE.GOV](http://wyden.senate.gov)

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

process—a process that typically takes between 18 and 24 months—before coming to the United States.

Setting a refugee cap of zero in the face of unprecedented global need would be a complete abdication of America's role as a refuge for those fleeing persecution, a defender of freedom and human rights, and a beacon of hope for millions around the world. It would also be a shameful assault on some of America's most basic values. I therefore implore to reject any attempts to shut down the refugee admissions process and urge you to instead work with Congress to raise the refugee admissions cap for 2020.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ron Wyden". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ron" and last name "Wyden" clearly distinguishable.

Ron Wyden
United States Senator